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NOVEMBER 11, 1995

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CEREBUS
mothers & daughters
49

199 OCT

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CEREBUS

NO. 199 OCTOBER 1995

DAVE SIM
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MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)
Women

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 186)
Reads

•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 187 to Cerebus 200)
Minds

MONTHLY

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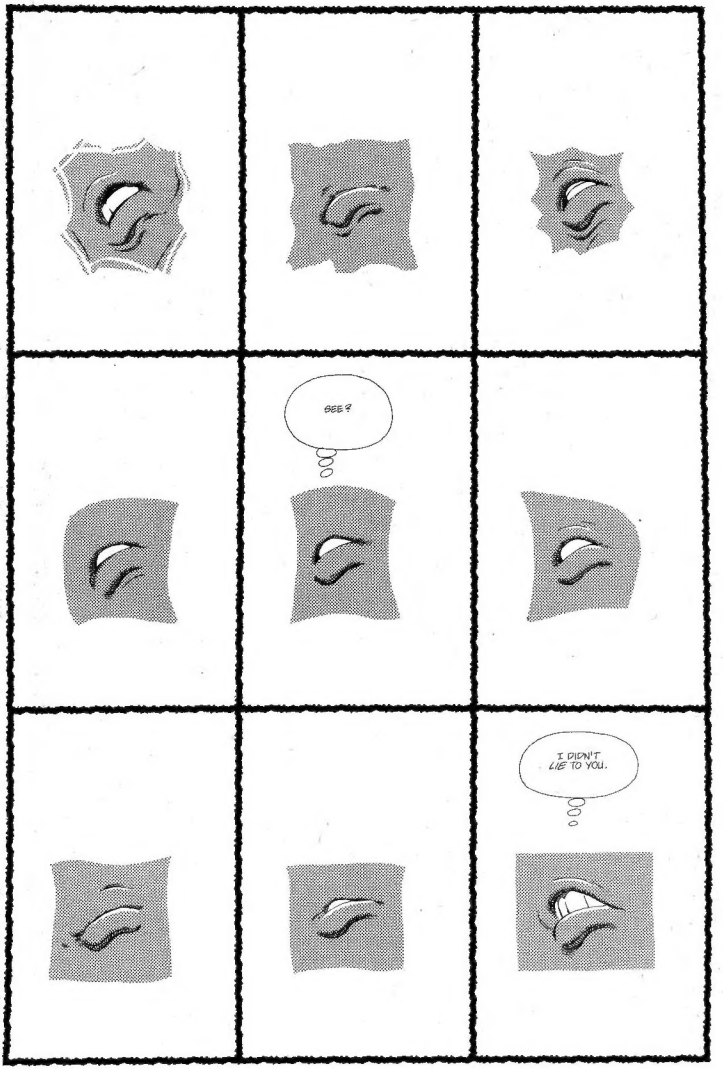
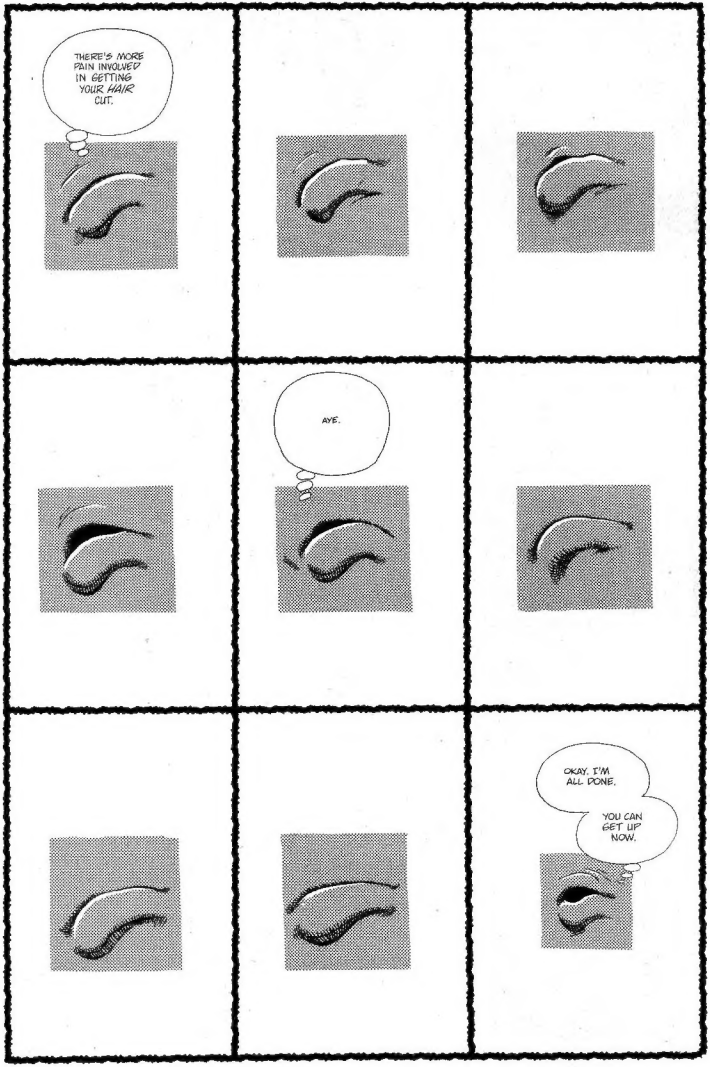
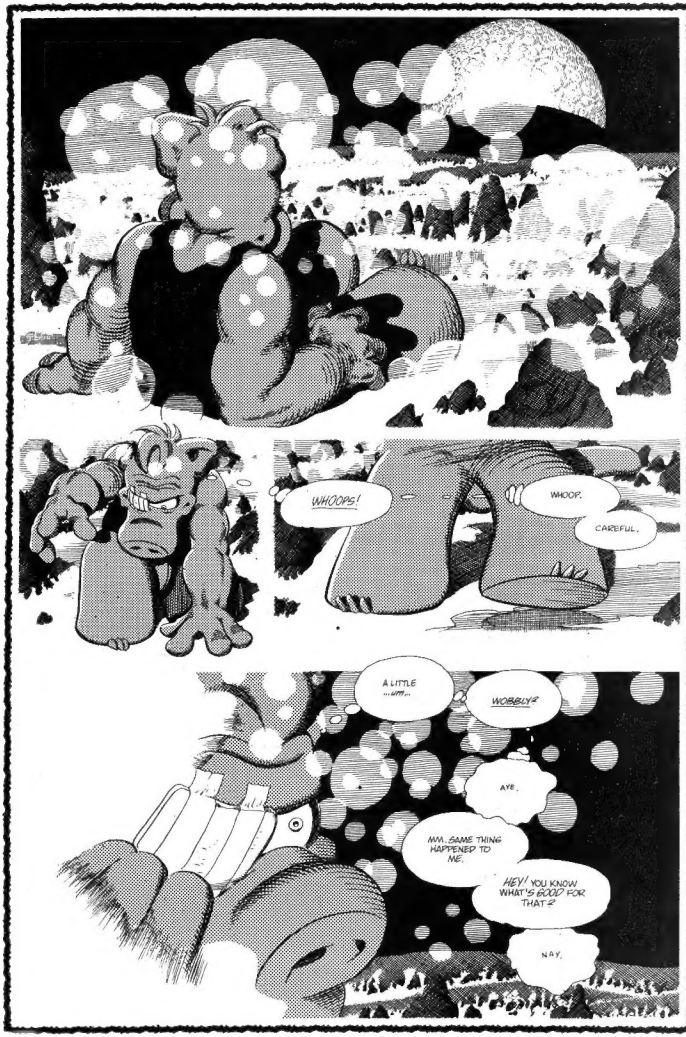
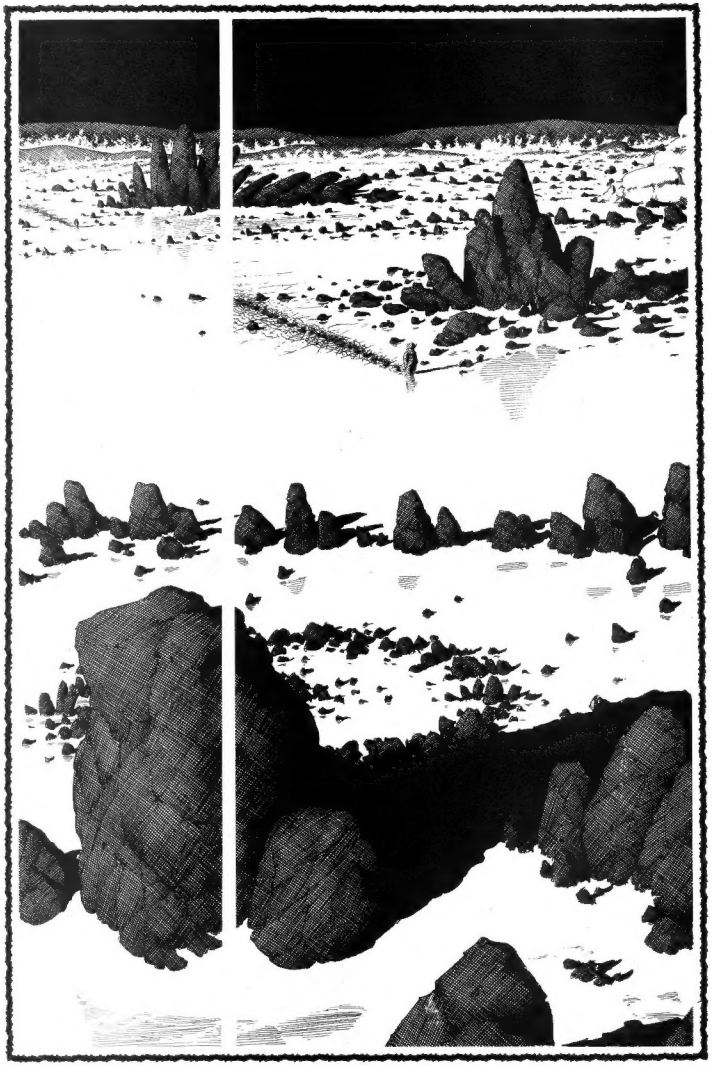

SEE?
I DIDN'T LIE TO YOU.

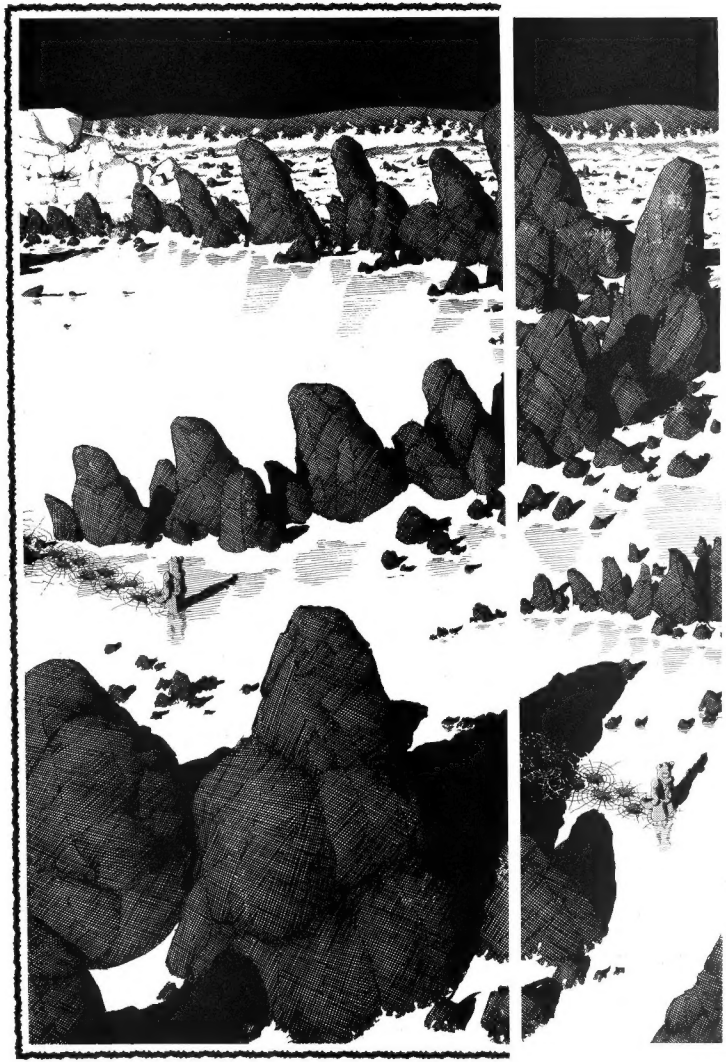

THERE'S MORE PAIN INVOLVED IN GETTING YOUR HAIR CUT.
AYE.
OKAY. I'M ALL DONE.
YOU CAN GET UP NOW.


WHOOPS!
WHOOP.
CAREFUL.
A LITTLE ...um...
WOBBLY?
AYE.
MM. SAME THING HAPPENED TO ME.
HEY! YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR THAT?
NAY.

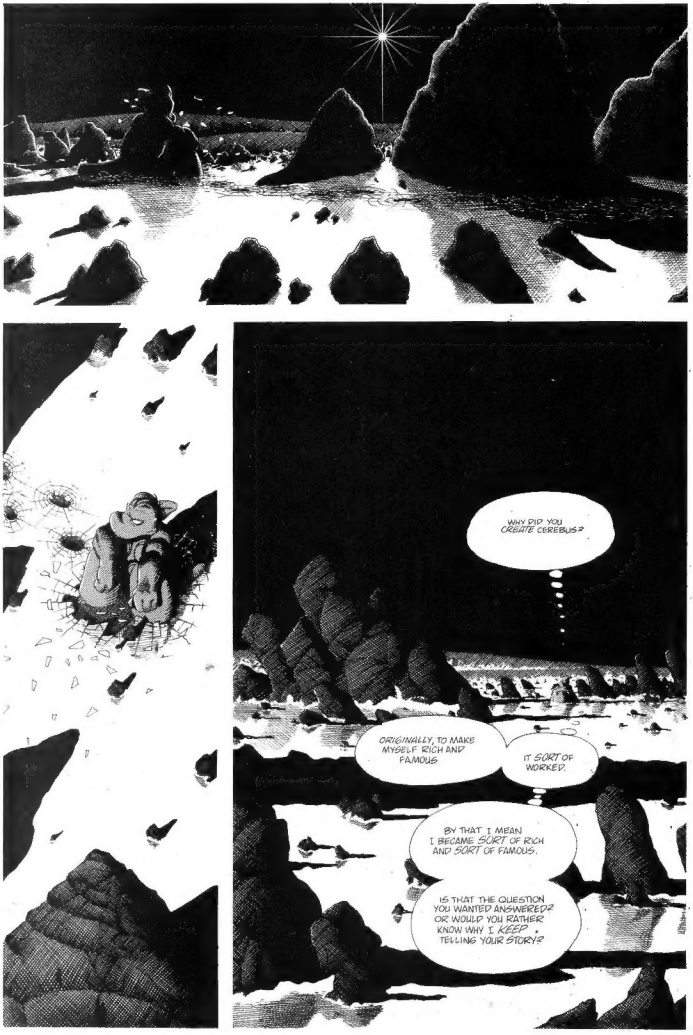
A NICE, LONG WALK.'
WHAT?
SURE, YOUR EYE DOESN'T HURT AND THERE'S NOTHING HARDING WITH YOUR LEGS...
AYE, BUT...
BUT
WHERE IS CEREBUS WALKING TO?
YOU HAVE ONLY TO DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT TO BE... AND YOU'LL BE THERE.
OH.

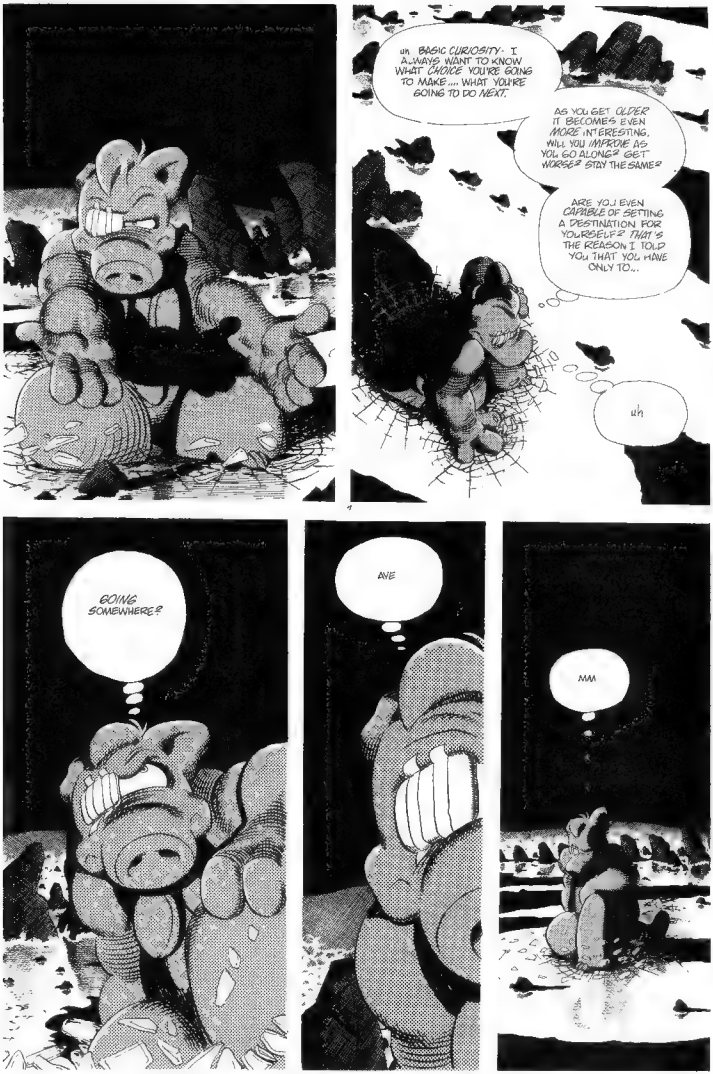
'A REPEATED FIGURE IN ARCHITECTURE OR DESIGN'
WITH A PIN-PRICK, I SCULPTED A FIGURE IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF YOUR MIND, INTRODUCED A DESIGN ELEMENT INTO WHAT REMAINS OF YOUR EXISTENCE.
WHETHER IT IS A REPEATED FIGURE IS UP TO YOU.
YOU CAN REMOVE THE PATCH IN AN HOUR OR SO. THE MINOR DISCOLORATION WILL BE GONE TOMORROW
DOES CEREBUS DIE LIKE THE JUDGE SAID?
YOU MEAN 'ALONE, UNMOURNED AND UNLOVED'?
AYE
WELL, YES, AT THE RATE YOU'RE GOING WHAT OTHER ENDING IS POSSIBLE?
WHAT OTHER ENDING TO YOUR STORY MAKES SENSE TO YOU?
THINK ABOUT IT.

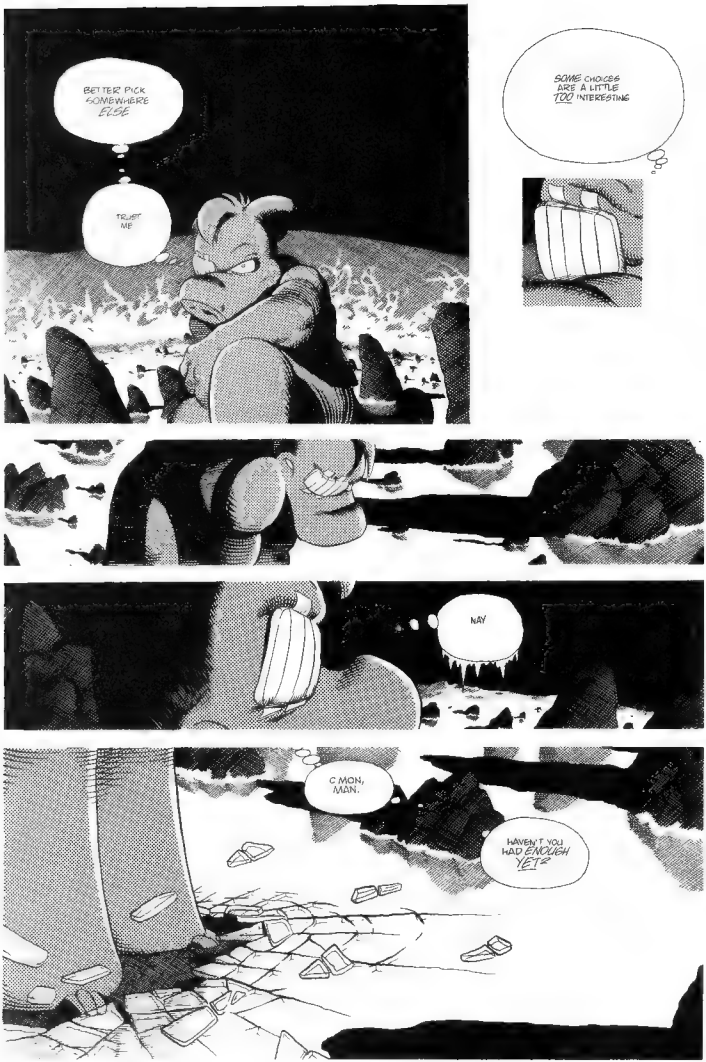




CEREBUS IS A TERRIBLE PERSON.
WELL, YES. BUT YOU SAY IT THE SAME WAY YOU'D SAY 'CEREBUS IS THREE FEET TALL.'
I JUST TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAVE ONLY TO DECIDE WHERE YOU WANT TO BE AND YOU'LL BE THERE
AND YOU STOP SIT DOWN AND SAY 'CEREBUS IS A TERRIBLE PERSON.'
DOES THAT SOUND LIKE A DESTINATION TO YOU?


WHY DID YOU CREATE CEREBUS?
ORIGINALLY, TO MAKE MYSELF RICH AND FAMOUS
IT SORT OF WORKED.
BY THAT I MEAN I BECAME SORT OF RICH AND SORT OF FAMOUS.
IS THAT THE QUESTION YOU WANTED ANSWERED? OR WOULD YOU RATHER KNOW WHY I KEEP TELLING YOUR STORY?


uh. BASIC CURIOSITY. I ALWAYS WANT TO KNOW WHAT CHOICE YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE.... WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO NEXT.
AS YOU GET OLDER IT BECOMES EVEN MORE INTERESTING. WILL YOU IMPROVE AS YOU GO ALONG? GET WORSE? STAY THE SAME?
ARE YOU EVEN CAPABLE OF SETTING A DESTINATION FOR YOURSELF? THAT'S THE REASON I TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAVE ONLY TO..
uh
GOING SOMEWHERE?
ANE
MM

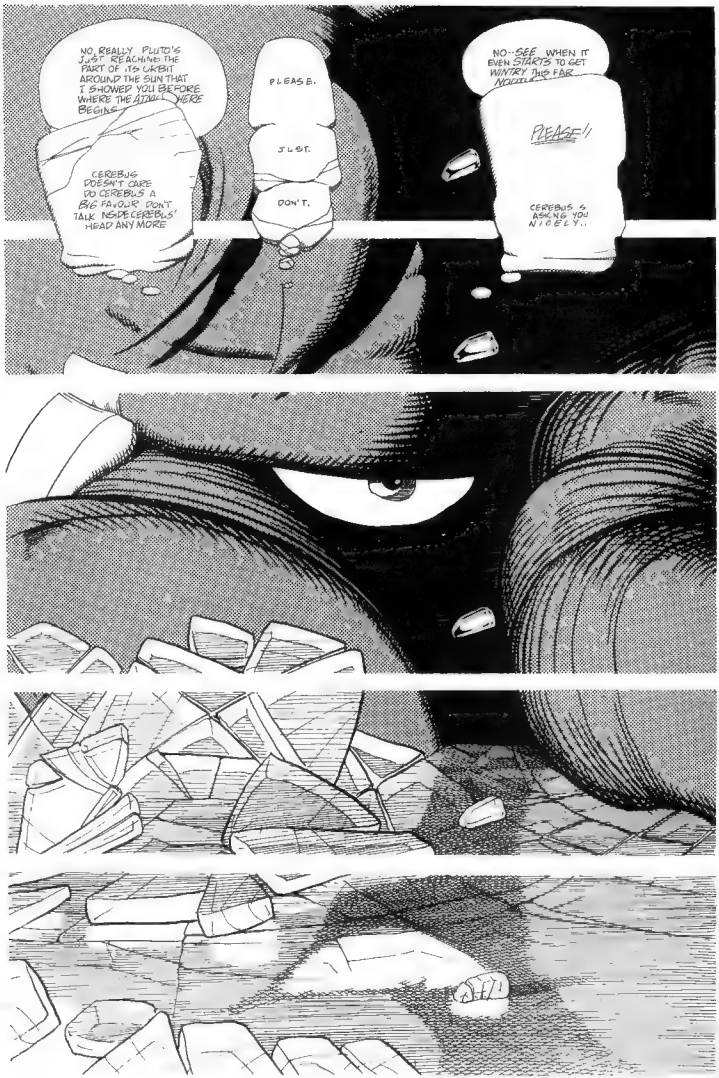

BETTER PICK SOMEWHERE ELSE
TRUST ME
SOME CHOICES ARE A LITTLE TOO INTERESTING
NAY
C'MON, MAN.
HAVEN'T YOU HAD ENOUGH YET?

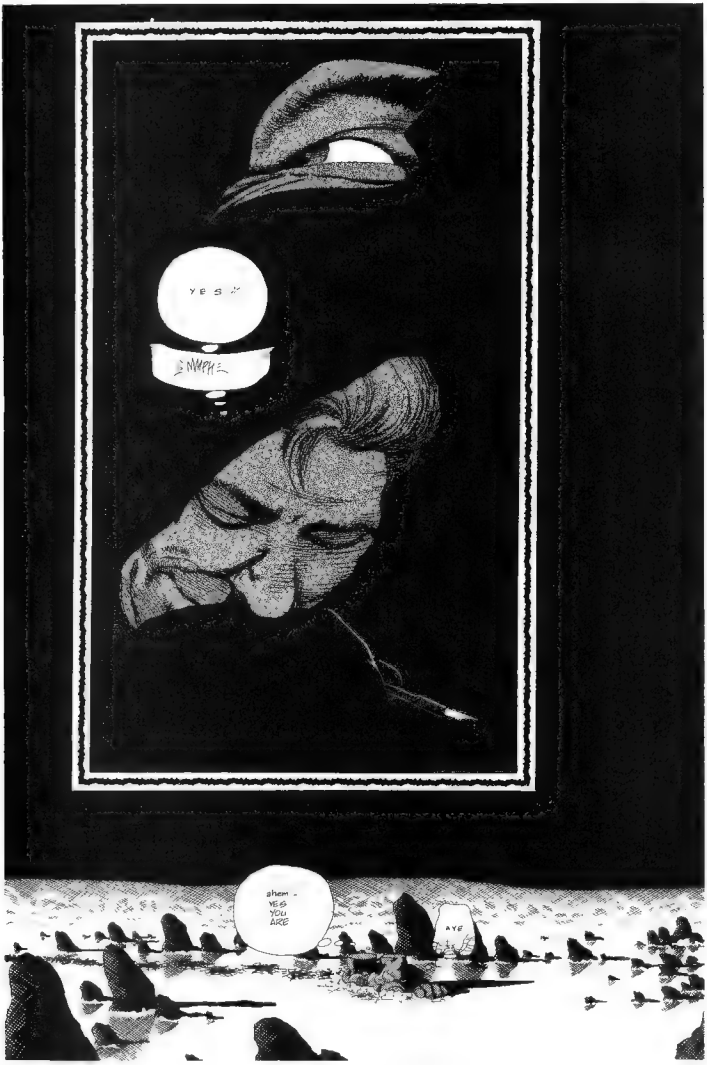
NAY.
I'M STRONGLY RECOMMENDING THAT YOU NOT DO THIS.
I CAN'T REMEMBER A TIME WHEN SHE LOOKED LOVELIER -- MORE RADIANT
OR HAPPIER
CAN YOU?

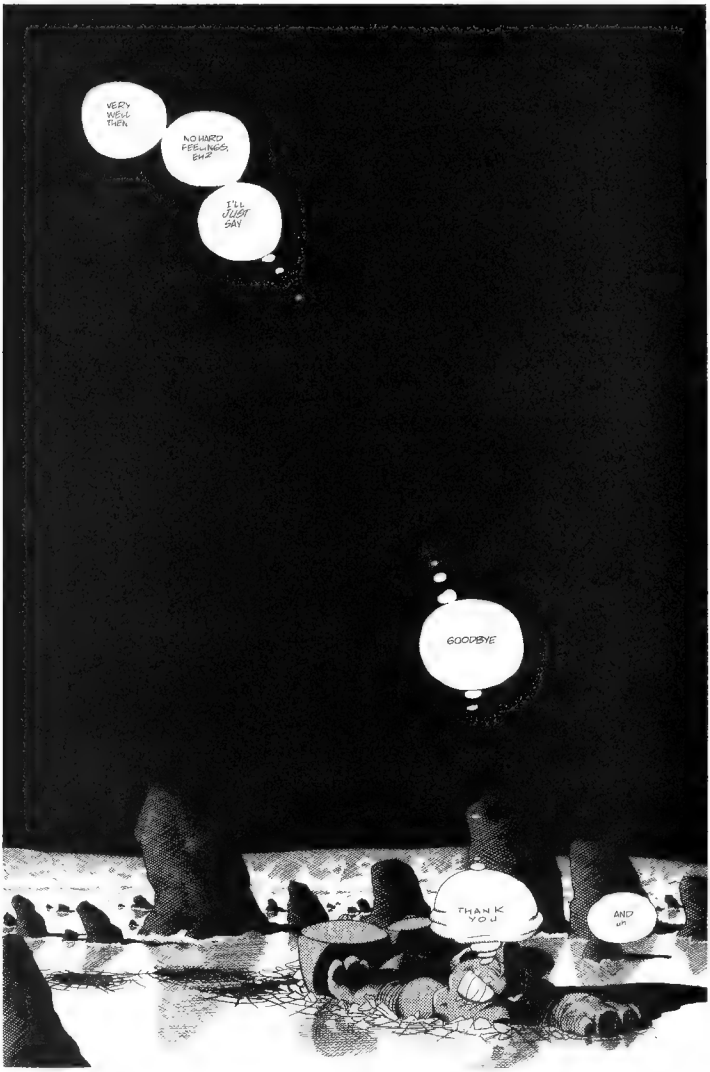
SMILING
FANTASIZING ABOUT THE EVENING TO COME -
AN INTIMATE MIDNIGHT SUPPER WITH HER..
WHOOPS CAREFUL!
BOYFRIEND
THAT'S THE FRONT DOOR TO HER SUITE UP AHEAD THERE
IF YOU HURRY..
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BREAK IN ON THEM...
...JUST AROUND THE TIME THEY'RE CURLED UP IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE
SIPPING BRANDY

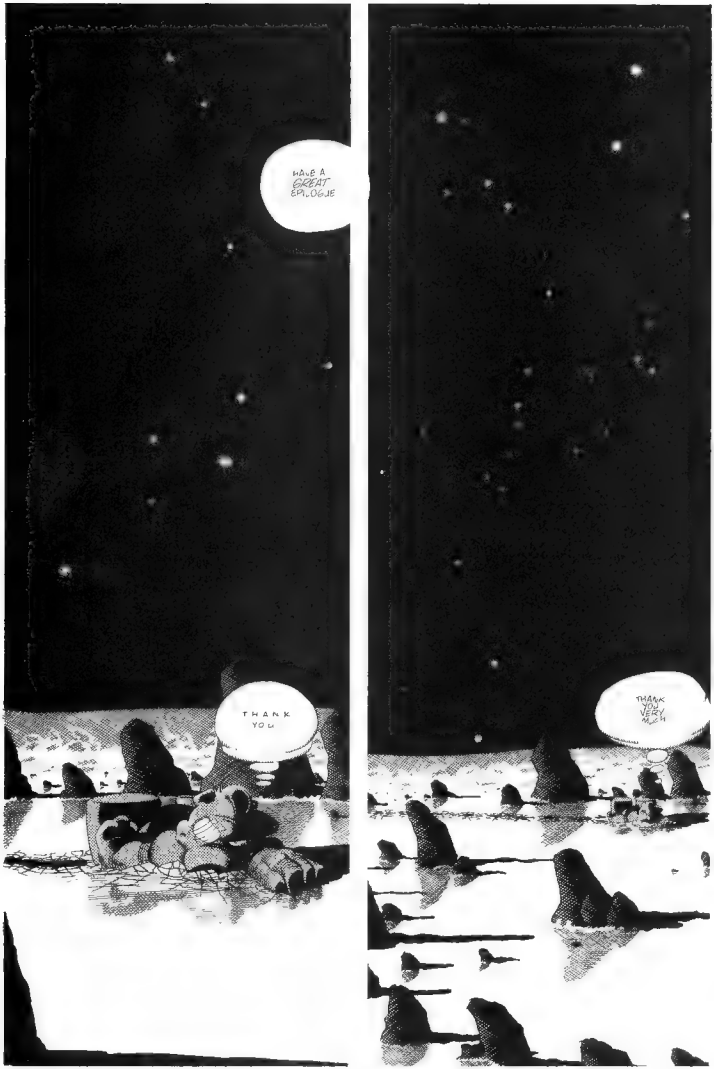
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO A LOT FASTER THAN THAT
AT THE RATE YOU'RE GOING, YOU'LL BE LUCKY IF YOU GET THERE BEFORE THEY BLOW OUT THE CANDLES AND TAKE OFF
OKAY!!
OKAY
OKAY
YO! WIN
CEREBELLUS RINES UP!

REALLY? THAT'S WHAT I WIN?
DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MUCH OF A PRIZE TO ME.
YOU LIKE IT HERE THAT MUCH, DO YOU?
AYE
I WAS KIDDING.
CEREBUS WASN'T LEAVE CEREBUS ALONE GO AWAY
YOU MEAN - SAME KIND OF DEAL AS THE JUDGES?
NEVER HAVE TO EAT OR SLEEP OR DRINK OR BREATHE OR?
WHATEVER JUST GO AWAY YOU'RE EVIL
GOSH IT THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT IT
AYE THAT'S THE WAY CEREBUS FEELS ABOUT
VERY INTERESTING CHOICE
WELL, LISTEN- I I FEEL JUST AWFUL ABOUT ALL THIS. TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO. I'LL PUT YOU AT THE SUNNIEST SPOT ON THE ENTIRE PLANET BEFORE
NO!
NO JUST GO AWAY
NOW
LEAVE CEREBUS RIGHT WHERE HE
AND GO AWAY PLEASE


NO, REALLY. PLUTO'S JUST REACHING THE PART OF ITS ORBIT AROUND THE SUN THAT I SHOWED YOU BEFORE WHERE THE ATTOLL WERE BEGING
CEREBUS DOESN'T CARE DO CEREBUS A BIG FAVOUR DON'T TALK INSIDE CEREBUS' HEAD ANY MORE
PLEASE.
JUST.
DON'T.
NO--SEE WHEN IT EVEN STARTS TO GET WINTRY THIS FAR NORTH--
PLEASE!!
CEREBUS IS ASKING YOU NICELY..
SHH!


YES
SNAPH
ahem - YES YOU ARE
AYE


VERY WELL THEN
NO HARD FEELINGS, EH?
I'LL JUST SAY
GOODBYE
THANK YOU
AND um


HAVE A GREAT EPILOGUE
THANK YOU
THANK YOU VERY MUCH

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Mr. Sim.

I met you in February of this year, in Austin. You signed my comic book. I'm the one who wrote you the letter about Arab philosophy last year, if that helps. Don't worry if it doesn't. You did ask me to write to you again, and I promised that I would. I haven't forgotten that promise. It's just that writing a letter to Dave Sim isn't an easy task. It's taken some time.

Directly, then: You've talked about wanting to commit suicide at times. I wonder sometimes if you're not very lonely. I guess that's what I meant when I asked you if you would always be happier in your secret place. While I'm not unfamiliar with finding joy in solitude, it doesn't seem overwhelmingly likely that human nature, any human's nature, can always achieve happiness when alone. I don't think you truly are happiest when alone, at least not always. After all, if that were the case, I don't think that you would go to the effort you do to be visible to your readership as a person. You don't allow yourself to be represented to the public by your work alone. Most authors or artists are just names on a cover, but you insist on being real in the eyes of your readers. If you wanted to be alone all the time, I'm sure you could be more reclusive.

(Actually, I was the perfect recluse from about 1989 to 1992. There was a six- to ten-month period in the middle there where I didn't move outside of a ten-block radius of downtown Kitchener. I still remember the dazzling impact of being driven somewhere and there were all these TREES going past the car windows. When I started going out and promoting the book again — on the '92 U.S. Tour — I realized that it provided a perfect balance to the hard, solitary work of creativity in exactly the proportion I required. Work consisted — and consists — of long stretches of not seeing another living soul, being inwardly focussed and passing unseen through my home town going to and from work. The personal appearances are the exact opposite. I can do brainless head sketches that tilt this way and that, the proportions wrong, the detail haphazard if not non-existent. I spend most of the time being flattered excessively, questioned about my opinion, meeting new people, getting caught up with old friends, and I can't walk five steps without being waylaid by someone who makes it very obvious that five minutes spent in my company is a Very Big Deal to them. One weekend a month, 7% of my day-to-day life. It's a great pressure release and makes me appreciate quiet, solitude and introspection all the more.)

You told me that being in your secret place as opposed to being in reality is like comparing waiting in an airport lounge with eating a steak dinner. I found this sublimely ironic. I've made some astounding discoveries in airport lounges. Airports fuse me with a feeling of adventure. Also, my father was very poor in his youth. Third-world poor. He vowed that when he grew up, there would be meat on his table every night. Sure enough, he has provided. He loves steak. When I lived at home, we'd eat steak about three times a week. It's become sort of common. Your analogy, as a result, provides mixed feelings.

(I grew up comfortably middle class. There wasn't a lot of steak, but there was no shortage of

material comforts. The jet-set image I needed at one time, to establish my own worth for myself — impressing friends and family and myself that someone was paying to fly me to California or New York or Texas: places that were just names every Canadian knew only from television. I find airports so neutral in design that they mean to me 1) I can't smoke, 2) I can read only until a baby or infant starts shrieking. The adventure to me is in meeting new self-publishers wherever I'm going, talking with local retailers, etc. I have no interest in being a tourist. At least not until issue 300 is done and I can go see the places that interest me — hopefully being able to sponge off some rich *Cerebus* fan when I get there.)

I wonder if it doesn't have a similar effect on you sometimes. I'd like you to consider this quote from a play called *The Shadowlands,* by William Nicholson.

WARNIE: Ah, you're a poet, Mrs. Gresham?

JOY: But that's all in the past now.

LEWIS: Why is that?

JOY: Let's say that I've turned away from the mirror.

LEWIS: The mirror? Do you mean the reflection of yourself, or the reflection of the world?

JOY: The one being vanity, which is bad, the other being art, which is good?

LEWIS: Possibly.

JOY: I don't make that distinction. See yourself in the mirror, you're separate from yourself. See the world in the mirror, you're separate from the world I don't want that separation anymore.

After I met you, I thought of those lines for days. She chose to stop striving for perfection in art to seek perfection in life. She stopped being an artist to become a saint. I marvel at what it cost her. It's easy to break one's wand on stage under the lights and say, "All our revels now are ended." I don't think it's as easy to break one's pen in real life, quietly in the core of one's heart. I'm no poet, and I don't know if I could do something like that.

(One of the big reasons I'm 'only' doing 300 issues. Mrs. Gresham sounds awfully pompous and self-interested to me, whether she's staring into a mirror at the world OR at herself. My experience has been that if you write and draw a lot, you get better and I like getting better. Whether I decide in 2004 that I've said all I have to say and just do comics as a part-time hobby kind of thing or fill a larger percentage of time than that, I won't know until I get there. Whatever I choose to do, I certainly hope I won't have the back of my hand nailed to my forehead like Mrs. Gresham.)

Are you lonely? You talk of great happiness derived from your work. I believe it. It really shows, and I admire you for it. But I wonder if you ever wish for more. Do you still think about committing suicide? **(No, I can't say that I'm ever lonely. My urge for companionship is pretty easily satisfied and I have great, long stretches of solitude which scratch the other major itch. I don't see anything else at life's smorgasbord that makes me wish for more. 'All you can eat' places invariably turn a good profit on me. No, no more suicidal impulses — even the ones I had way back when came largely out of boredom or self-pity and never got close to the Big Jump. 'Never take yourself out, always make them kill you' — that's my motto.)** I'm sorry if I've offended you, but it's in my nature to try to understand. It doesn't endear me to many, I'm afraid. Next time, I'll just write to you about the pursuit of women. At any rate, enjoy what's left of the summer. Tell Gerhard to stop wishing he were a minimalist. My guess is that the trick is neither to use too many lines, nor too few, but to use as many as are necessary. I, for one, think he is doing a superlative job. **(Hey, me too.)**

Your servant,

T.S. Hattar
10701 Alta Loma Drive
El Paso, Texas
USA 79935

P.S. Try not to be too cross when people yell at you for undertaking projects like *Reads.* Consider this analogy: Say a beautiful woman has chained this guy to a four-poster bed and is giving him the best sex of his life. Three seconds before what promises to be the most intense orgasm he's ever had, she swiftly dismounts, strolls over to a comfortable armchair, opens a mysterious book, and starts reading to him about art. Pretend the guy's interested in the girl's mind. No matter how captivating he finds her thoughts, you and I both know that he'd really, really, really rather ejaculate first. It's only natural. But his hands are chained down. He can't do a thing about it. After he deflates and cools off, he may be able to cope with this. "After all," he thinks, "she'll probably do me again sometime, and she is, after all, telling me something I want to know." After being driven to the edge by *Women,* a number of your fans followed Mr. Sensitive's example about you and *Reads,* albeit in more neutral terms. I'm sure you're grateful for such tender mercies.

But consider a guy who wants women to go away after screwing him, a guy with no interest in this woman other than the orgasm she could have provided. At one minute he's being ridden to climax, and the next, he's chained to a bed, with blue balls, listening to a lecture on art. That's where the transition from *Women* to *Reads* left such readers. Mr. Sim, they're not interested in your mind. Those who read *Cerebus* for a cheap thrill were naturally perturbed. After all, they *pay* for *Cerebus*! The equivalent in terms of our analogy would leave the woman in very bad shape. You're lucky you just got yelled at. Have a little compassion, man! You've probably been there before. **(Yeah, yeah, yeah. Lucky I just got yelled at? What are the Mr. Sensitives going to do? Get their girlfriends to beat me up at the next convention? If you re-read a little more carefully, I covered all of this. $2.75 an issue does not entitle someone to guide my efforts. I just re-read a lot of *Reads* the other day when I was sending someone a copy, and I was surprised at how well it has held up. I think you're just pissed off because you wanted the orgasm lurking up ahead to be some kind of 'All You Need is Love' nonsense. The guys I wanted to go 'spoo' at the end went 'spoo' just fine, T.S. Compassion? Compassion for what? Of course I've been there and I got the same advice I'm now giving — grow some balls and a spine, or quit your whining at least.)**

P.P.S. I saw a musical the other night called *Gypsy.* Before the girl spoke, I saw Jaka looking in the mirror. Before, not after. When she said the words, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I wish I could write as clearly as you draw.

(It's a great film, isn't it? I watched it three or four times in the course of writing *Mothers & Daughters.* I'm sure Ethel Merman made a better 'Rose' than

Rosalind Russell in the original Broadway version, but that's one of the things about film — it really becomes the yardstick against which all other versions are measured. *Gypsy*'s probably DOA as far as feminists go, which I think is a real shame. I really do.)

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I am the person who spoke to you of publishing an unauthorized mini comic featuring Cerebus at Mid-Ohio Con in 1993. You referred to me pejoratively in your Notes from the President in *Cerebus* 187.

I feel that an explanation is in order. Shortly before November 1993 you had written in *Cerebus* that, as far as you were concerned, if Gerhard wanted to walk out of Aardvark-Vanaheim and publish his own version of Cerebus, he was free to do so. When I spoke to you at Mid-Ohio Con, you told me that you would not stand in the way of *anyone* who wished to publish *Cerebus* material, with or without your permission. You told me (and I paraphrase, perhaps badly) that you believe in total freedom of the press, and if your version of Cerebus could not stand up to competition, then it did not deserve to survive.

This was to me a powerful, revolutionary concept. Not protect one's own copyright? Let one's own creation stand up to open competition without legal action? I felt this to be an important idea, one worthy of widespread dissemination. (Mind you, I am still not certain whether I believe it to be a *good* idea, but that does not impact upon its potential importance as a new concept in the marketplace of ideas.)

I discussed this with friends at the convention, and they assured me that Dave Sim was talking through his hat, that he would never *really* allow someone to publish a direct Cerebus rip-off without taking action. I was convinced of the opposite: I had read your editorials and believed you to be a man of conviction and principles who would stand by his words no matter what.

So, how to see if Dave Sim really meant what he said? As revolutionary as your ideas are, I felt that they would not be widely known or taken seriously unless someone stepped forward to "call your bluff." The solution was to come up with a product that would be a total violation of your copyright and see what you would do when presented with it. And this product could not be some warm, fuzzy fanzine singing the praises of *Cerebus*. It had to be the most loathsome, detestable kind of copyright violation, one that would inspire any but the most fierce upholder of principles to cry foul.

Thus was born the promotional flyer for the mini-comic "Cerebus and Sophia: The Wedding Night." I had it hurriedly drawn and inked by friends from a small-press publisher (I promise you, had they more time the end result would have been of much higher quality), complete with publishing company: "Courage of His Convictions Press." I waited in line to show it to you, and my watching friends actually stood at a distance so as not to be caught in the eruption of violence which they fully expected. When I reached you and showed it to you, you told me that I had the right to publish whatever I wanted without your permission, and even had the graciousness to sign the flyer.

In ecstasy that I had been proven correct (and at the same time proving that you were, indeed, a man of your word), I proceeded to distribute copies of the flyer to various potential interested parties.

I have two regrets regarding the entire affair. The first is that I am sorry that, due to time and motivational constraints, I never actually published the mini-comic. It was written but never drawn, and would have been eight pages involving a very drunken Cerebus accidentally invoking Jaka's name in a passionate moment with Sophia, followed by Sophia's retaliation. The art would have consisted solely of word balloons and sound effects against a black background, plus a version of the promotional flyer (which did not actually depict Cerebus or Sophia) as a cover, plus a two-page editorial explaining the purpose for the existence of the mini-comic.

The second regret is that you came away from the incident with a poor opinion of me and my proposed endeavor. However, in retrospect, such a reaction was inevitable. If I had explained my purpose to you, it would have negated the point of the "experiment." Thus, it was unfortunately necessary for you to walk away with an opinion of yours truly as being lower than a garden slug. I apologize.

Rest assured, I have nothing but the highest respect for you, your creations, and especially your revolutionary ideas on business and marketing. My intention in the affair was to draw attention to your ground-breaking ideas regarding ownership and copyright, and unfortunately that was lost because I never published the mini-comic. I apologize for any hurt this may have caused you and am glad to finally set the record straight. I hope that now, in understanding my motivation, your opinion of me has risen a bit.

I look forward to seeing you again at some upcoming convention and hereby grant you permission to take a swing at me, if you feel such action is justified. (Just let me take off my glasses first.) I remain,

A friend, a fan,

Rex Joyner
2917 Westbrook Drive, Apt. 108
Fort Wayne, IN
USA 46805

Hurt? Take a swing at you? Jeez, why didn't you throw in 'pitch a hissy fit' and 'break down in tears'? Now that you've explained it, it makes perfect sense. I just mistook the glittery look in your eyes for 'Hah, I'm going to make money off this putz and he doesn't have enough common sense to be pissed off.' Nothing wrong with testing the courage of someone's convictions — I just wish you'd have told me before I did the Note in 187. It would've helped me make the same point a little more eloquently.

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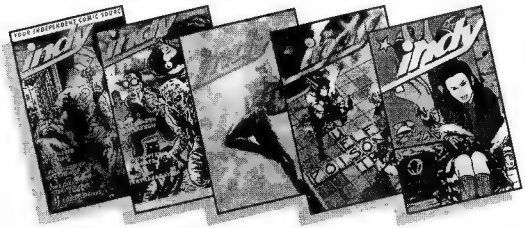

Comin' Soon! Terry "Strangers in Paradise" Moore does Indy 12

This is getting more difficult all the time. Doing the *Cerebus Preview*. There is just so much good stuff coming in that I have completely lost track of what I've promised to *Preview* and when. I *know* I've got a *Preview* of Scott Berwanger's *Anubis* coming up. He's already got the first five (or is it six?) issues to me in photocopy form. Great book. I was going to do a *Preview* of David Lapham's *Stray Bullets*, but it's already headed for the *Bone/Shi* stratosphere. Deservedly so — by the time this comes out in October I'm going to look like a bandwagon jumper.

So, I decided to shift gears and go for a *real* small-press gem that got handed to me in either Bethesda or Manchester: *Kiss & Tell*. No cover price on it. Comic-book size, colour-photocopy cover. The excerpt here is 'Princess Melanie'. It was a real toss-up as to whether I would print this one, 'Prelude to a Kiss', 'Sales: The Divine Comedy', or 'The Gospel According to St. John' (which is, as Patricia Breen, writer, bills it, 'Her All-Time Favourite True Life Ghost Story'). This is basically a very well-organized and engaging autobiographical comic. The interesting thing is that it's Patricia Breen's stories as drawn by Robert Wertz. Robert serves as Greek chorus, heckler, and comedy relief. The by-play between the two is an added bonus, portraying the relationship between writer and artist on a single project to good effect. They've got it all sorted out. They really do. No wrestling for dominance in evidence — this is Patricia's bit and this is Robert's bit.

The only thing that worries me is the name of the company: Please Publish Us Press (Aaargh — oh, well, maybe they're just kidding). Patricia (according to the business card inside) is also the Associate Publisher of *Today's Health Care* (so maybe 'Please Publish Us' really is just a joke). Anyway, you can order a copy of this for (oh, let's say) three dollars, postage included: 850 Schuylkill Dr. #CC2, Kenilworth, PA, 19464 or fax Patricia and Robert at (610) 323-4285. You're going to *have* to — it's really the only way you'll get to see 'The Gospel According to St. John'. See, I'm in complete agreement with Patricia. It *is* the best True Ghost Story ever. Heh-heh.

Well, I'm surprised that this hasn't happened before. Patricia and Robert reached a parting of the ways before the first issue came out. I won't go into the flurry of phone calls that went on before I arrived at a diplomatic solution, but suffice to say it was one of those situations where I go and check in the mirror to see if my hair has turned white. So — here comes the compromise: four pages of the original Kiss & Tell, *four pages of Patricia's new* Kiss & Tell *and four pages of Robert's current efforts in the mini-comics arena. With any luck I won't have to go through something like this again for a good, long while.*

I met Melanie on the first day of third grade. As a Star Wars fan, I was impressed that she wore her hair in nifty Princess Leia Braids.

We became friends instantly. Since Melanie only lived a few blocks away from my house, we'd meet every day after School and play Star Wars.

Our biggest fights always concerned which of us would be Princess Leia.

We both liked drawing and crafts, so we would spend days constructing elaborate playsets for our figures.

When summer vacation came, we played exclusively at my house because my parents had air-conditioning. This arrangement worked great for me because Melanie's mom gave me the creeps.

Melanie's father died when she was a baby. Her mom stayed at home all day making bread dough figurines and working on paintings. She paid a friend to sell them at craft shows because she didn't like to leave the house.

In fact, Melanie's mother hardly ever left the house; not even to buy groceries.

Melanie's mother lived in a concentration camp for several months during her childhood in Germany. Melanie's Grandfather died in that camp.

Melanie's mother came to the U.S. after her release. Melanie told me that her mother stayed at home because she was afraid "Bad People" may come to take them away.

Although they were Jewish, Melanie's mom put up a tree at Christmas in case the "Bad People" came to their house.

By the time we reached fifth grade, I played with Melanie less frequently. She began to seem moody and strange. I started making new friends.

Other kids began to make fun of Melanie. Her mother only let her shower once a week, so she was teased for looking dirty.

She became withdrawn and her once-excellent grades began to drop.

Around this time, we were assigned a writing project together for school. Melanie was so distant that she didn't do any work for the project.

Our teacher noticed Melanie's drifting attention and called her mother.

For some paranoid reason, Melanie's mom accused me of going to the teacher. She forbade Melanie from playing with me. We have not spoken since.

I switched schools in sixth grade, so I didn't see Melanie again until High School.

As a teenager, Melanie was very quiet and stayed to herself. She didn't have many friends and I never saw her at any school functions. I occasionally heard cracks about her greasy hair.

Even though she lived one block from the bus stop, Melanie's mother drove her to the stop every morning and would wait with Melanie in the car until the bus came. Similarly, she would be waiting at the stop when school ended.

Melanie graduated as the top student in my class. Despite her impressive academic achievements and numerous scholarships, she attended a local community college. Rumor had it that her mother wouldn't let her go away to school.

I see her from time to time when I go home to visit my parents. I always say hello and greet her with a smile. She either looks away from me or right through me, but she is always silent.

Frankly, I think that's pretty disturbing. Somehow, a polite smile seems appropriate.

Then again, I don't know why I even bother to be friendly. After all, Melanie was the one who always had to be Princess Leia !

END

When I was six years old, I fell madly in love with Starbuck from *Battlestar Galactica*.

Who wouldn't fall for a dashing and clever space hero like Starbuck (a.k.a. Dirk Benedict) ?

STAR COLLECTOR

I dreamed up dozens of wondrous space adventures for me and my cosmic love. I was convinced that Starbuck would feel the same passion for me ...

... if he just had the opportunity to meet me in person.

Anyway, in June of 1979, I decided to invite Starbuck to my Seventh Birthday Party.

I spent hours composing a brilliant invitation which I was certain would grab his attention.
Dear Starbuck, I love you very much and...
After I mailed the invitation, I proudly announced to my school friends the news that Starbuck would be coming to my birthday party.
ANOTHER DOROTHY HAMILL HAIRCUT
STARBUCK IS GONNA BE AT MY BIRTHDAY PARTY !!
Wow !
Neat !
Of course, there were skeptics.
Starbuck isn't going to a stupid GIRL PARTY !
What do you know ? You're just a boy !
But as my birthday grew closer, it became more difficult to sway my expectations.
Uh, Honey, Starfighters and Actors are real busy people...
But he would have written if he wasn't coming, right ?
After weeks of anticipation, the day of the party finally arrived.
With all of my friends in attendance, the party was a smash.
Strangely, the only person who seemed disappointed when Starbuck failed to show up was me.

Though my pride was injured I tried to remain rational.
I'm sure he would have come if he could, Patty.
Yeah. He probably had to save somebody from the Cylons.
Later that night, however, I learned the awful truth.
Hrmph. So that's why he couldn't come to my party
It's The Donny and Marie Show! with special guest star: Dirk Benedict of the hit series Battlestar Galactica!
Little did I know that it would only get worse.
Marie, you're the most beautiful woman I've ever met
WHAT!?
You know, Marie, we've grown really close these past few days and I want to grow even closer!
Oh, Dirk
At the end of the Donny & Marie show, Dirk Benedict revealed the identity of his new girlfriend....
...and KISSED Marie Osmond on National Television!!
I was crushed. It was bad enough he blew off my party to appear on the show, but how could he make out with Marie Osmond on My Birthday? I felt like a fool for swooning over such a space jerk.
My whole image of Starbuck changed after that night. I was too humiliated to enjoy Battlestar Galactica anymore. I mean, any space hero who would choose Marie Osmond over myself had to be an idiot!
KILL THEM SLOWLY!
BY YOUR COMMAND.
8

Of course, since I was only seven years old, my heart healed quickly.
Soon, both Starbuck and Dirk Benedict became distant memories.
Oh Yeah ?
I didn't pay much attention to The A-Team when it aired in the early eighties. In fact, I remember being surprised that I ever thought Dirk Benedict was cute !
A-
I PITY THE FOOL WHO DOESN'T SHOW UP AT BIRTHDAY PARTIES.
I was even less impressed when I saw Dirk appear on talk shows a few years later boasting that he healed his prostate cancer with positive thinking.
...and you can read all about my prostate in my new book .....
The truth is: I didn't see too much of Starbuck following my seventh birthday.
Shortly after the "Marie Osmond" incident, Battlestar Galactica was cancelled.
And I found a new and cuter T.V. Space Hero ....
....who was much more my height !
Aw...they could dance "cheek to cheek" .
DORONY HAWEL HAIRCUT.
Bee-dee bee-dee bee-dee
And so ends a timeless tale of Passion, Betrayal, and Love Machines.
THE END

Mad Curry Comics
P.O. Box 53652
Philadelphia, PA 19105-3652
USA
August 30, 1995

Dave Sim
Aardvark-Vanaheim, Inc.
P.O. Box 1674, Station C
Kitchner, Ontario N2G 4R2
Canada

Dear Dave,

Thank you for this opportunity. I had been hoping to someday get a Cerebus preview of my work, but I didn't expect it so soon. I do regret the strange circumstances surrounding this, and would like to take this opportunity to apologize for having dragged you into the middle of it.

I have enclosed my first mini-comic which I have just printed and distributed locally. It's a one shot that I finished shortly before I started on Kiss and Tell.

The four enclosed pages are from the first issue of Mad Curry, an on going title, which will be out mid-October. The first issue will be another short one, but from the second issue on I will be moving to a full twenty page story format. I'm doing this cautiously to allow my self time to work some of the bugs out of printing, distribution and promotion, and also to give myself more of an idea of how much this will actually cost me. I intend to stay on a bi-monthly schedual with a mini-comic format with the hope of someday actually printing it.

Now on to the important stuff. Mister Mortality Presents: Vinyl Junkies In Love is currently available from the address above for 75¢(american) postage included. Mad Curry issue one will be available in mid-October but can be pre-ordered now for 75¢ as well.

Thanks again for this unexpected opportunity. I hope I haven't caused too much trouble.

Sincerely,

Robert Wertz

MAD CURRY
NUMBER: THREE
SUPER CREEPS.
BY ROBERT WERTZ
WOW! WHAT A HAUL! I TELL YA, BILBO...
MY NAME'S BILL, YOU SQUELCHING WALRUS LICKER!
...WE'RE QUITE A TEAM! GRAVE ROBBERS EXTRAORDINAIRE! WHY WITH MY BRAINS AND YOUR SHOVEL ARM WE'LL GO DOWN IN GRAVE ROBBING HISTORY! WE'LL BE GRAVE ROBBING MILLIONAIRES!!!
K-CHUNK
I CAN SEE IT ALL NOW! WE'LL BUY THAT MANSION ON THE HILL OVERLOOKING THIS VERY GRAVEYARD, AND...
THAT'S ABSOLY FAWLY HALL THEY'LL NEVER SELL IT.
THEN I'LL HIRE SOMEONE TO BUMP THEM OFF!
WHAT, ALL EIGHTY FOUR OF THEM?
WOULD YOU QUIT INTERRUPTING!?! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TRYING TO PLAN MY LIFE HERE!?!
SORRY.
PLAN! I'LL GIVE YOU A PLAN! HOW ABOUT ONE INVOLVING YOUR HEAD AND MY SHOVEL!!!
ANYWAY, WHERE WAS I..., OH YEAH, THE MANSION!... AND THEN I'LL OPEN THE HORACE P. NORTON UNIVERSITY OF GRAVE ROBBING AND I'LL USE THIS GRAVEYARD AS A TRAINING GROUND! IT'LL BE BRILLIANT!!!
SHHH...
DON'T SHUSH ME WHILE I'M PLOTTING!
WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED.

AW... IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF KIDS!
I'VE NEVER MET A KID WHO GAVE A FORNICATING FIG ABOUT THE SANCTITY OF THE DEAD!
WOW! DID YOU SEE THAT!? ONE OF THEM HAD A REAL SEVERED HEAD!
RUN!
SO?!
RUN LITTLE CHILDREN!
iż SO?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN SO?! I'VE WANTED A REAL SEVERED HEAD SINCE I WAS LITTLE!
RUN!
IF YOU TWO DON'T SHUT UP AND RUN FASTER I'LL SEVER BOTH OF YOUR HEADS!
BUT YOU CAN NEVER ESCAPE THE HAPPY HEAD OF YOUR MISERABLE FATE!!!
IT'S NOT THE KIDS I'M WORRIED ABOUT. IT'S THEM.
OH.
SOD OFF O' SAINTLY ONE!
YEAH, LICK MY ESOPHAGUS, CORPSE BOY!

BLOOD IN A BUCKET! NOT THIS AGAIN!
WHY MUST LIFE ALWAYS BE SO COMPLICATED!
SHUCK!
I BET YOU KNOW WHAT'S COMING NEXT!
I BET YOU CAN'T WAIT!
ALL RIGHT. COME ON YOU VERMINOUS CORPSE LICKERS!
HORACE, IF ONE OF THESE GHOULS DOESN'T KILL YOU AND EAT YOU...
I MAY HAVE TO MYSELF.
HERE IT COMES!
YOUR FAVORITE PART!
PENETRATION! OOH, BABY!
ISN'T THIS WHAT LIFE'S ALL ABOUT?
YOU SICK PERVO!

OOH. CHOP IT OFF!
K-CHUCK
OOH. LOP IT OFF!
ALL RIGHT, WHICH ONE OF YOU BONE CRUNCHING BIMBOS IS NEXT?!
KRACK!
DID YOU SEE THAT!? DID YOU SEE HOW THEY RAN?! I TRULY MUST BE KING OF THE GRAVE ROBBERS TO HAVE SCARED THEM LIKE THAT!
HORACE, I DON'T THINK IT WAS YOU THAT SCARED THEM OFF.
THEN WHO WAS IT?
ARKE KREGGEN IPNEA SKREGGEN BONNEA OUSHE
BY SATAN'S TOENAILS, WHAT IS IT NOW!
I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW.
IT IS I, TOROT ZEB REWNWER! GIBBERING MAD IDIOT GOD, CREATOR OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE, AND KEEPER OF THE SACRED SPATULA!!!
TO BE EXPLAINED. SOME DAY. (IF YOU ARE VERY LUCKY)
JUST WHEN YOU THINK IT'S SAFE TO READ COMICS AGAIN...
...WE GO AND GET RELIGIOUS ON YER ASS.

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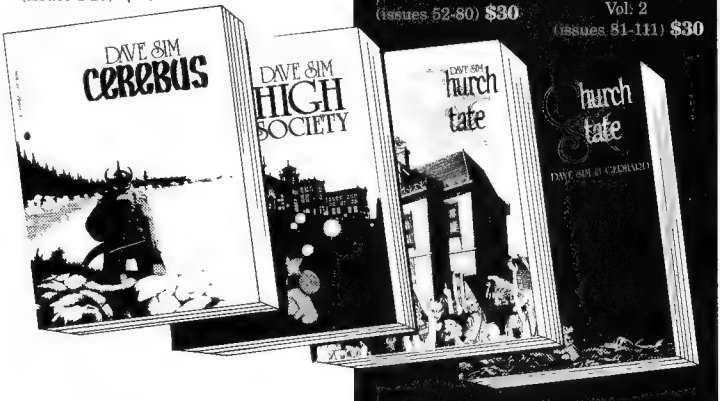

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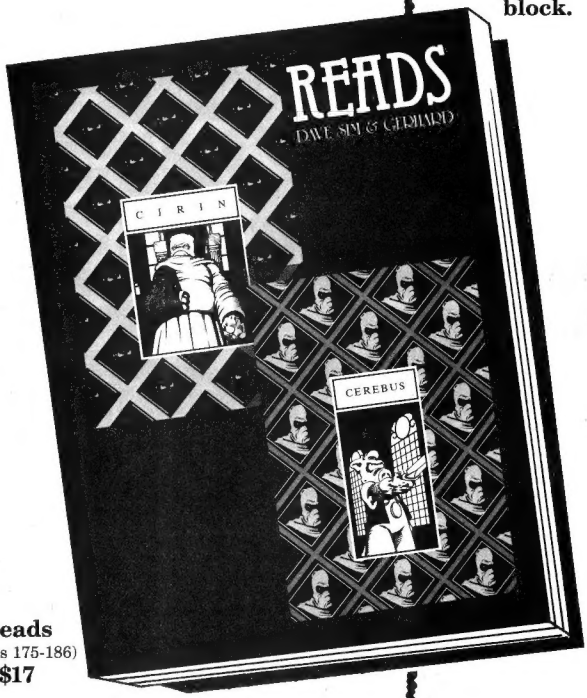
There's a new kid on the block.



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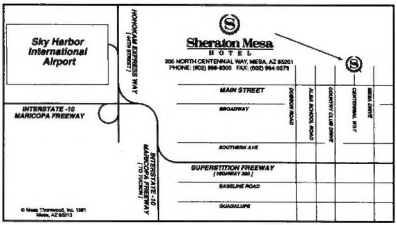
GATHERUM '95

MESA COMMUNITY CENTER

201 North Center Street, Mesa, Arizona



MESA, ARIZONA

NOVEMBER 11, 1995 • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

As the back covers of this issue and last issue indicate, GATHERUM '95 will be a different event from any of the other stops on the 'Spirits of Independence Tour'.

'An Exhibition of Storytellers and Their Work' neatly encapsulates this difference. There will be no Retailer du Jour (although interested retailers will be admitted free with the presentation of their business card). It will also be a smaller and more intimate affair than any of the others, with only thirty-one exhibitors.

GATHERUM '95 will be held at the Mesa Community and Conference Center (201 North Center Street in Mesa). Hotel accommodations are available at:

Sheraton Mesa Hotel
200 North Centennial Way, Mesa, Arizona 85201
Telephone: (602) 898-8300 • Fax: (602) 964-9279

Super 8 Motel (Town Center)
3 East Main Street, Mesa, Arizona 85201
Telephone: (602) 834-6060 • Fax: (602) 833-2905

James Owen has planned a private party for the exhibitors for the night before, so there will be no informal get-together for fans and aspiring creators until after the event — at the Sports Bar (Steve Stone's Bar & Grill, across the street from the Mesa Sheraton) and then the hotel bar (depending on which is open later). Creators interested in attending James' party should contact him at TALIESIN PRESS, P.O. Box 40904, Mesa, Arizona 85274-0904. Fax (602) 464-2534 for times and directions.

Because of the changed date Jim Valentino is unable to appear because of a scheduling conflict with his European promotion tour. We regret any inconvenience to Jim and his fans.

GATHERUM
1 • 9 • 9 • 5

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November 11, 1995 • Sheraton Mesa • Mesa, Arizona

An Exhibition of Storytellers and Their Work

more information on inside back cover